IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated in the complete listing of claims listed below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

directing a client's request for an information object to an information object repository without regard as to whether the information object is actually stored at the information object repository, wherein the directing includes mapping an address of a client to the information object repository by executing a Web Information Locator by Distance (WILD) protocol; and

determining, according to information included in a uniform resource locator (URL) whether the client is authorized to receive the information object.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the information object repository is selected according to specified performance metrics.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the specified performance metrics comprise one or more of: average delay from the information object repository to the client, average processing delays at the information object repository, reliability of a path from the information object repository to the client, available bandwidth in said path, and loads on the information object repository.

4.   (Original) The method of claims 2 further comprising instructing the information object repository to obtain a copy of the information object.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the information included in the URL comprises information identifying the requesting client.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the information included in the URL further comprises information identifying an owner of the information object.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the information included in the URL comprises one or more digital signatures.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the one or more digital signatures identify one or more of: the requesting client, and an owner of the information object.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the information included in the URL is compared with an access list at the information object repository to determine whether the client is authorized to receive the information object.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising denying access to the information object if the client is not authorized to receive the information object, otherwise, returning the information object to the client.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the information included in the URL comprises multiple digital signatures and each digital signature is compared with an access list at the information object repository to determine whether the client is authorized to receive the information object.

12. – 21. (Canceled)